RUPEE SERIES



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

POST-INDEPENDENCE GENERATION
CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Karan Singh

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

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5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, iddas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side
—Rigveda, I. 89.i

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KARAN SINGH



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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

K. M. MUNSHI

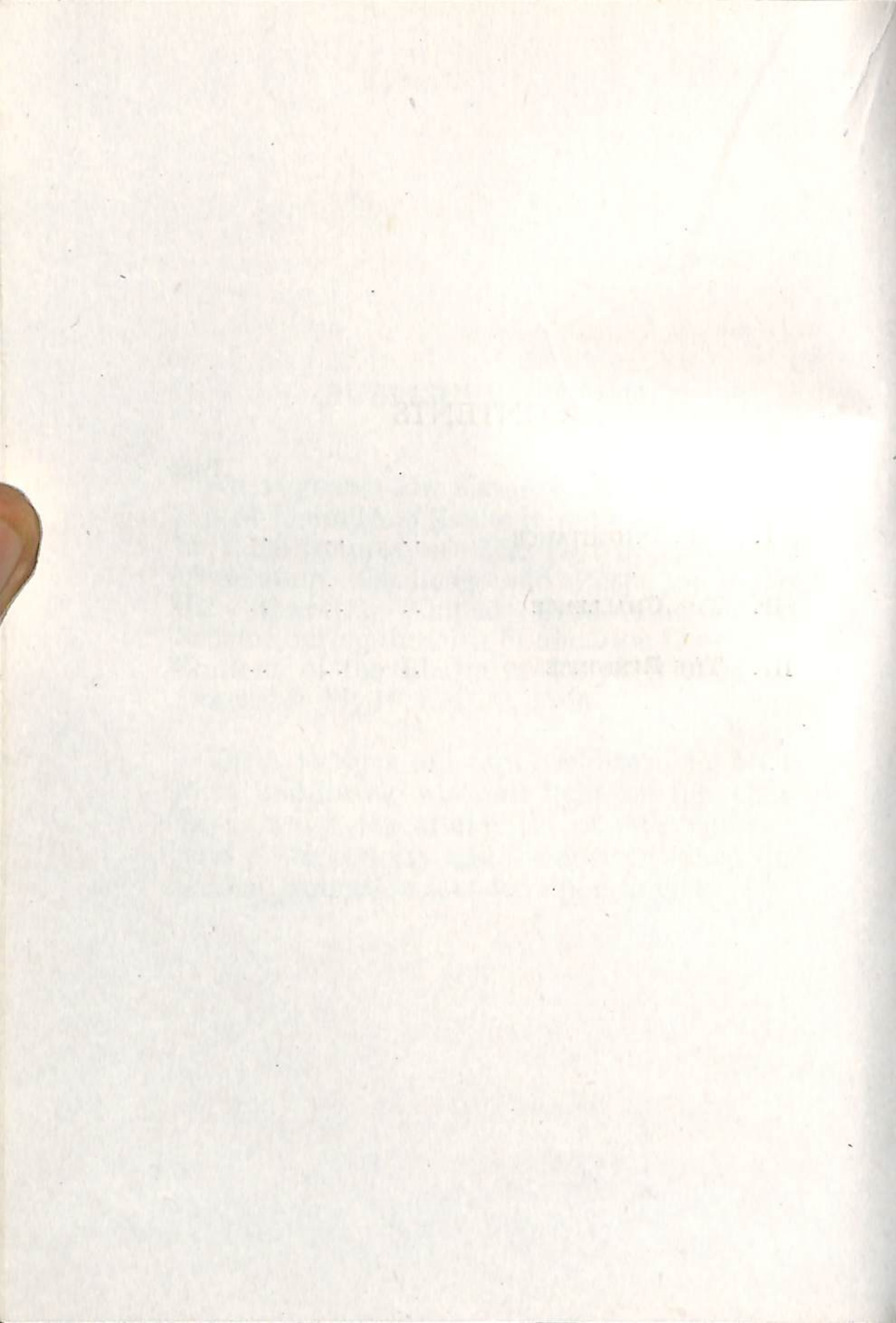
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September 28, 1963

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

His Highness Dr. Karan Singh, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, delivered a course of three lectures on 'The Post-Independence Generation: Challenge and Response' under the Bhavan's Annual Birla Endowment Scheme during the 27th Foundation Day Celebrations of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on December 18, 19 and 20, 1964.

These lectures are now published in book form and throw welcome light on the challenges which the attainment of independence pose to the country and the answer which the present generation is called upon to give.

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I. THE INHERITANCE

The attainment of her independence by India after centuries of servitude to foreign rule is one of the outstanding events of recorded history. About a seventh of the human race thereby emerged into the light of new found freedom, pulsating with urges and aspirations for a better life. It has indeed been a rare privilege for us to have witnessed this great event, although we may still be too close to it to really appreciate its immense significance in world history. For those of us who were young when this historic transformation took place it was even more exciting; as the poet has said:

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> but to be young was very heaven."

The post-independence generation of Indians —to which I have the privilege of belonging—is in my definition that generation which attained maturity after India had become free. It is, of course, difficult to lay down a precise criterion, but generally speaking we may say that those who were twenty or under in 1947 could be included in this category.

In choosing the topic *The post-independence generation—challenge and response* the thought upper-most in my mind was that it is the young men and women of the post-independence generation who will guide the destiny of this country for the next several decades and anything which deals with

their hopes and their frustrations, their pursuit of progress and their quest for ideology should be of interest both to those at the helm of affairs now and to those in whose hands the reins of leadership will fall tomorrow.

First, I will attempt to trace in broad strokes the legacy inherited by the post-independence generation from the Indian renaissance which began in the nineteenth century and which led to the great movement for national freedom. I will then deal with the spectrum of challenges that this generation faces today in its task of building an integrated and dynamic India moving boldly into the nuclear age and conclude with my views about the response to these great challenges. I will also seek to outline an ideology whereby the post-independence generation can prove itself worthy of its historic destiny.

It may at once be objected that the post-independence generation covers such a vast mass of individuals, such an infinite variety of religious and social practices, of economic and intellectual distinctions, that any generalization would be quite impossible. It can also be pointed out with a good deal of force that I myself can hardly claim to be typical of the generation as a whole. While it is true that a generation speaks with many voices, even as does the mighty ocean that laps the shores of this great city, yet it is the voices of the individuals who compose it that make up the separate notes of its great harmony. And so the views of any single member of a generation have some value and significance. As for the question of being typical, it is a moot point whether really there is any

such thing as a 'typical' individual. But even if I were the first to accept—as I do—that my individual limitations and opportunities may have been somewhat unusual, I cannot thereby agree that I should not be permitted to voice my views. What I say can obviously not be what every member of the post-independence generation feels and thinks, but even as a purely individual and subjective view it does, from the very fact that I belong to that generation, gain a certain amount of typicality and relevance.

The mighty freedom struggle that culminated in our independence in 1947 had its roots far back in our history, and the growth of modern Indian nationalism can more especially be traced from the time of that great event known to history as the Indian Mutiny, but perhaps more appropriately described as our first national uprising. The revolt was ruthlessly crushed, and in the eighteen-sixties India lay prostrate and helpless at the feet of her foreign rulers. To an observer at that time it would have appeared incredible that within less than a century this defeated people would rise and emerge as one of the great independent nations of the world. But the miracle in fact did happen, and it was the Indian renaissance beginning in the nineteenth century that laid the foundations for this remarkable recovery.

The renaissance in India was directly stimulated by the British impact. India had been subjected to many invasions and incursions in the past, but with the British advent she fell for the first time under the lure of a people who were completely alien and at the same time technologically much fur-

ther advanced. The British impact was deep, abiding and many-faceted, and looked at in historical perspective it must be admitted that with all its excesses it helped substantially to bring about many of the preconditions necessary for the transformation of India into a modern State and the growth of modern Indian nationalism. These included political unification to a considerable degree, administrative centralization and modernization, the development of transport and communications, the breakdown of village self-sufficiency and the emergence of a national economy. Above all, there was the introduction of English education which by spreading ideas associated with Western liberalism had a profound effect upon the development of Indian politics and indeed upon almost all facets of her national life. Thus, British rule, which like all colonial systems was essentially exploitative and predatory, yet had the effect of stimulating India to a mighty intellectual and political upsurge that led to her eventual liberation from that very rule itself.

It is not necessary here to enter into a detailed description of this renaissance; it will suffice to say that it began with a series of social reform movements within the vast body of Hinduism. This is not to imply that the other great religious communities in India did not contribute towards the revival of Indian nationalism and its eventual culmination in freedom. The contribution of Islam towards building up our national culture has been substantial, and India's vast Muslim population, although a part of it was later committed to a secessionist ideology, played an important role in the

national movement from its very inception. The role in the freedom struggle of men like Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Khan Saheb and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Dr. Ansari and Badruddin Tyabji, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Zakir Husain, is too well known to require any repetition. The Sikhs in north India were always the sword-arm of the nation; the small but remarkable Parsi community based largely in Bombay also made important contributions to the national movement, as did Christians and people belonging to other religious denominations in the country.

The fact remains, however, that the vast majority of Indians have always been Hindus, and Hinduism largely set the tone of national culture in India and acted as the great creative force behind most of her varied achievements. It provided the ethos, the milieu, the great backdrop, as it were, against which the drama of India's history has been played out through the centuries. And it was but natural that Hindu reform should have provided a basic motivating factor behind the Indian renaissance.

This ancient religion, which has sustained India through shadow and sunlight ever since the dawn of its history, can be seen to have gone through periodic phases of great creativity followed by narrowness and exclusivism. In her periods of glory Hinduism was always receptive to fresh ideas and impulses from all directions as is borne out by the famous dictum of the Rigveda:

Aa no bhadrah ritawo yantu vishwatah "Let noble thoughts come to us from every side."

But these phases of creativity were often followed by an obscurantist reaction, a narrowing down of the great universal vision. It was such a phase that had been in the ascendant after the Moghul Empire had passed its zenith and the great impetus of the mediaeval Bhakti movement had petered out. The despair and apathy was deepened when in the eighteenth century India fell prey to the ruthless manoeuvres of a handful of European traders and adventurers who, by playing local potentates off against each other with consummate skill, succeeded in conquering the whole of this great country.

The nineteenth century, however, saw the emergence of a number of remarkable men who together succeeded in bringing about a complete renovation within the body of Hinduism. This power of resuscitation indeed has been one of its great features, the reason that Hinduism has continued to be a living force for so many millenia and Indian civilization has an unbroken tradition while many of the other great world civilizations have perished and passed away from the face of the earth to live on only in the minds of scholars and the four walls of museums. Even at the darkest moments of trial and tribulation there have appeared in this country men and women who have kept the torch of faith and wisdom alight and caused a spiritual rebirth in India.

It was perhaps inevitable that the modern renaissance should have begun in Bengal, the province which had first felt the impact of foreign rule. Raja Rammohan Roy can be said to be the first of the great Hindu reformers of modern India, and his

founding of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 was an outstanding event. He was followed by a series of great Bengali leaders including Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chander Sen both of whom developed the movement that he had founded, although under different names. Soon after, the founding of the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay in 1867 by Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, and of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab in 1875 by the dynamic Swami Dayananda Saraswati, gave a further impetus to this movement for social and religious reform. The ridiculous taboos and superstitions that had masqueraded under the name of religion for so long at last began to be openly attacked, and their pernicious influence upon society gradually loosened.

Simultaneously began the recovery of our ancient heritage, and here we must own a debt of deep gratitude to British and European scholars such as Princep and Hultz, Cunningham and Ferguson, Williams and Max Muller, who by their untiring labour brought to light the glorious past of our nation with its many-splendoured achievements. The knowledge of our past greatness had a deep inspiring influence upon the newly emerging intelligentsia that was to spearhead the national freedom movement. Mention should also be made of the Theosophical Society, which rendered valuable service by its extensive translations of Hindu scriptures and did much to strengthen the rebirth among educated Indians of pride in their national heritage.

All these movements, though profoundly significant, took place outside the central core of

Hinduism. It required an inner revolution within the heart of traditional Hinduism itself to galvanize this vast ocean of humanity into purposeful and progressive endeavour. This again took place in Bengal with the advent of one of the most remarkable men of modern times, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who lived from 1836 to 1886. This extraordinary man became a beacon of spiritual light and inspiration at a time when the renaissance was gathering force and required a new orientation. To the feet of this untutored and unsophisticated saint came the elite of Bengal; the lawyers and doctors, the administrators and business men, the students and intellectuals, who were to form an important nucleus of modern Indian nationalism. The story of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples reads like a latter-day gospel, and I must resist the temptation to enter into it in any detail. His foremost disciple was Narendranath Dutta who later became famous throughout the world as Swami Vivekananda.

The writings and speeches of Swami Vivekananda mark an important chapter in the emancipation of modern India. Deeply devoted and committed as he was to the high principles of Vedanta, he was a ruthless opponent of all narrow-minded pettiness that he encountered. He thundered against the social insensibility that had sullied the fair name of Hinduism; poured contempt upon the 'kitchen religion' with its fantastic taboos that passed under the guise of orthodoxy; pleaded for the uplift of the poor and the needy, of the afflicted and the suffering. For him the misery of the great masses of India was intolerable, and he could con-

ceive of no religion worth the name that would be impervious to this vast and ubiquitous ocean of suffering.

Vivekananda awakened the nation to a new awareness at once of its glorious spiritual heritage as well as its miserable material condition. His voluminous writings, and the lectures he delivered through the whole length of the country from Kanyakumari right up to Kashmir, had a profound influence upon the Indian renaissance and can be said to have given it a new orientation. On the one hand he highlighted the glories of our philosophy and wisdom based upon the teachings of the Upanishads and the sages of old. On the other he stressed the importance of modern values, including the prime necessity for economic emancipation and the service of suffering humanity. He also pleaded for the realization that all religions were in fact so many different facets of the same essential quest, and that inter-religious conflict was thus a travesty. He laid before a spell-bound India a new vision of a glorious rejuvenated future, and in a short life achieved virtually a complete restatement and reinterpretation of Hinduism to meet the new challenges that faced it.

With this new intellectual and spiritual awakening the stage was set for a movement forwards in the political field also. This was not long in coming, and by a strange irony it was an Englishman who led the way. In 1885 Allen Octavian Hume founded the Indian National Congress, and thus began a new chapter in our political development. For several years the Congress was dominated by the so called moderates, men of outstand-

ing patriotism and ability such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Rashbehari Ghosh and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. These men injected into the Congress from its very inception a high intellectual standard, an awareness of the importance of constitutionalism, and a deliberate attempt to absorb into the Indian experience the best qualities of the British. This provided an important and enduring strand in Indian nationalism, and despite the fact that more radical measures were later resorted to, the contribution of the moderates must be considered to be of great importance.

By 1895, however, the younger and more radical elements in the Congress were beginning to get restive and impatient. They felt that the moderates' policy of "petition, prayer and protest" as Sri Aurobindo Ghosh described it, lacked the essential fervour and dynamism without which the country would never attain its independence. Outstanding among the radical leaders were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Sri Aurobindo who later became one of the greatest mystics and philosophers of modern times. This group was disappointed and frustrated with the tepid course that the Congress followed. Sri Aurobindo thus voices the hopes that the founding of that organization had stirred in him: "How shall we find words vivid enough to describe the fervour of those morning hopes, the April splendour of that wonderful enthusiasm? The Congress was to us all that is to man most dear, most high and most sacred." But he was soon disillusioned, and in a series of remarkable articles entitled 'New Lamps

for Old' published in the *Indu Prakash* in 1893 he wrote: "I say of the Congress, then, this—that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts not the right sort of men to be leaders."

Sri Aurobindo and the other radical leaders of Bengal had been deeply influenced by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great Bengali author whose novel 'Anand Math' in particular fired the imagination of a whole generation. This contained the concept of the divine motherland whose service was the highest privilege and for whom everything should if necessary be sacrificed. Anand Math contained the famous poem 'Bande Mataram', Hail to the Mother, which became the rallying cry of the entire radical nationalist movement. It is also of interest to note that the radicals were influenced by the Irish nationalist rebellion as well as the Risorogimento in Italy.

The gulf between the Moderates and the Radicals rapidly widened, and finally came to a head at the Congress session held at Surat in 1906. The session ended in a fiasco, with shoes, chairs and tables flying in all directions, marking an irrevocable split between the two wings. The Moderates, supported and encouraged by the Government, won the day in theory, but in practice it was the Radicals who emerged victorious. For the first time they had succeeded in giving the national movement a mass base. Their concept of Purna Swaraj—complete independence—enthused the vast

millions of this country into fresh activity; their fearlessness and willingness to face whatever dangers and risks may be involved in the national struggle—even death—brought a new sense of power and militancy into the whole movement. Their experiments with the practice of boycott in all its many facets, and their popularization of the concept of Swadeshi gave the defenceless masses of India a new weapon with which to fight their foreign rulers.

A spiritual, almost religious fervour was created. Men like Sri Aurobindo, for whom the emancipation of Mother India from her shackles was not merely a political but a spiritual imperative, looked upon the national movement as a 'yajna' in which they must sacrifice their all to emancipate the motherland. This extremist credo had as a necessary corollary an aspect of terrorism, and the throwing of bombs, blowing up of railway lines and even political assassination began to come into evidence. Thus, against the constitutionalism and gradualism of the Moderates was counterpoised the passionate extremism of the Radicals.

It was Gandhiji's historic role to have fused these two strands of the freedom movement into one mighty united nationalism. A great deal has been written about this remarkable man who is today revered as the Father of the Nation, and I will content myself by saying that he was heir to the best in both the moderate and the extremist traditions. He looked upon himself in many ways as a moderate, and has put on record that he considered Gokhale to be his political Guru. His gentle and constructive approach to all problems; his essential

antipathy towards violence or terrorism of any kind; and his willingness to absorb the best of the British tradition would tend to support this view. Nevertheless, he was in many ways more extreme than even the radicals. His uncompromising acceptance of the concept of Purna Swaraj; his adoption and perfection of the techniques of boycott, passive resistance and Swadeshi; the close co-relation in his thought between religion in its deeper sense and the political struggle; his mass appeal and proletarian bias, all these make him the perfector of the early radical approach. To this he added his own special emphasis upon many important points; his raising non-violence and satyagraha to the status of an eternal moral principle; his deep concern for the backward sections of the population, specially the so-called scheduled castes whose treatment had been a standing disgrace on Hindu society; his revulsion against all fanaticism and religious bigotry; his insistence upon the re-integration of the village as the basic unit of society; his gift in winning the active co-operation of the Indian peasantry; his constant stress upon self-purification and high moral values; in these and a dozen different aspects of national life Gandhiji left the lasting impress of his unique personality.

At this juncture three other factors of considerable significance for the freedom movement require to be mentioned. The defeat by Japan of Russia in 1905 showed for the first time that Western powers were not invincible after all, and that an Asian country—given the necessary discipline and resources—could emerge victorious. The First World War which soon followed, representing as

it did an internecine struggle between conflicting European imperialistic systems, further weakened the myth of European superiority.

Then in 1917 came the Bolshevik revolution which must remain a landmark in modern history. The ideas of Marx and Engels became overnight the guiding principles behind Europe's largest nation, and Lenin emerged as one of those rare persons whom destiny decrees to become a hinge of fate. Marxian ideas had a considerable influence upon the then younger cadre of Congress workers, specially men like Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, although due to their differing temperaments they each reacted in a very different manner. The absolutist and blood-drenched methods of the early Russian communists never much appealed to the main stream of Congress thought, but Marxian ideology did inject into it a heightened awareness of the importance of economic determinism, and strengthened its egalitarian bias. In fact, from then onwards there was a deliberate attempt in the freedom movement to combine the political democracy of Western liberalism with the economic egalitarianism of Marx, and this continues to be an important factor in our national development.

To revert to Gandhiji, one of his great gifts was the capacity to gather round himself men and women of outstanding ability and patriotism drawn from all walks of life, and draw them into the movement for national liberation. The glittering galaxy of talent that Gandhiji created was largely responsible for carrying to fruition the freedom struggle and seeing its final culmination on that historic 15th of August 1947. Thus it was that when we became

independent we had at the helm of affairs men like Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari, Abul Kalam Azad and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, and numerous others both at the Centre and the States who had been inspired by Gandhiji's leadership and who formed a cadre of such outstanding merit as hardly any newly independent country in the world has been fortunate to enjoy.

In particular there was Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji's proclaimed heir, who was destined to guide the nation during the most crucial years of its early existence. It is a tribute to Gandhiji's political genius that he chose—in preference to others with equal claim—the one man who would prove to be most relevant to the needs and requirements of free India. Although he differed in many respects from his teacher, notably in his agnosticism and westernized socialism, Panditji carried forward in crucial fields the basic Gandhian approach—in his passionate attachment to secularism and democracy, and acceptance of the key principle that ends can never justify the means, nor wrong means succeed in attaining correct ends.

Panditji, of course, gave his own significant orientation to free India, specially his left-liberalism and his theory of non-alignment in foreign affairs. For fourteen years after the death of Sardar Patel he was the unquestioned leader of the nation, and during this period he did much to shape the contours of free India. He was a humanist with a radical bent of mind, eager that the country should progress rapidly towards democratic socialism. He was a votary of science and technology, and saw in them

the power that could transform our backward polity and bring it on par with the developed nations of the West. He was an implacable opponent of bigotry and superstition, often to the extent of seeming to display hostility towards any form of organized religion. Although he enjoyed unquestioned power he was a democrat to the core and contributed immensely to the healthy development of parliamentary democracy in this country. His love for his country and countrymen was deep and abiding, and they in turn gave to him most generously of their affection.

The legacy inherited from the freedom movement by the post-independence generation is thus one composed of many varied strands: the zeal and dedication of the Hindu reformers; the constitutionalism and legalism of the moderates; the spiritual nationalism and extremist ideology of the radicals; Gandhiji's concept of satyagraha and ahimsa, and his undying urge to uplift the Harijans; Jawaharlal Nehru's passionate commitment to democracy and secularism, planning and panchsheel; the intellectual eminence and organizational acumen of a whole galaxy of outstanding national leaders.

All these are part of our heritage, and to this must be added the great intellectual and artistic achievements of the pre-independence twentieth century in India: the sublime poetry of Tagore and Sarojini Naidu; the scientific genius of Raman and Bose; the mystical idealism of Sri Aurobindo and Maharshi Ramana; the scholarly attainments of Malaviya and Radhakrishnan; the constitutional acumen of Ambedkar and B. N. Rau; the pioneering industrial genius of Tata and Birla; these and a

myriad other facets of our national life were enriched and enlarged for us by outstanding men and women. Two general tendencies which we have inherited from the national movement should also be mentioned; firstly a general socialistic commitment born of the fact that during the freedom struggle vast masses were enthused and involved; and secondly a general tendency to defiance of authority which was the inevitable result of a vast movement against alien domination.

There is, of course, a less glowing side to our inheritance. The great trauma of partition vivisected the subcontinent, caused the death and ruin of millions of our countrymen and left wounds in our national consciousness so deep that their effects continue to be felt even today. This in turn can be traced back to the separatist movement which also threw up some outstanding figures such as Sir Saiyad Ahmed and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Father of Pakistan. That is a whole saga in itself, and we are certainly too close to the event to be able to see in full perspective the revolutionary implications of partition. It is a fascinating study to trace how the original demand for separate electorates and reservation of Government jobs was later fanned into a movement for partition, and it is worthwhile to point out that even in the 1946 elections the secessionist party failed to secure a majority in most of the Muslim majority provinces. It is not my intention to deprecate or attack the concept of Pakistan; it must be remembered that Pakistan was created with the ultimate approval of the Congress leaders also, and in that sense Nehru and Patel were as much responsible for the creation of Pakistan as Jinnah and

Liaquat Ali. Pakistan is now a nation sovereign and independent, and we wish her well. But it cannot be denied that partition, apart from the immediate difficulties caused by an exodus of unprecedented magnitude of minorities from one country to the other, has left a whole complex of other problems with which the post-independence generation has got to grapple.

Also on the debit side is the crippling burden of poverty and economic backwardness that we inherited; the social stratification and stagnation that persist despite reform; the limited scope of modern scientific ideas, particularly in the countryside; the fact that ours is a population still predominantly illiterate and growing at a phenomenal rate. When we became independent there were vast gaps in our national life that foreign rule could hardly have been expected to fill, and these lacunæ continue to bedevil our progress even today. With freedom came a revolution in expectations, but also the chilling realization that our capacity to fulfil them is considerably limited by the very weaknesses that we have inherited. Thus the post-independence generation inherited a situation which was at once forbidding and hopeful, fraught with difficulty and yet pulsating with opportunity.

II. THE CHALLENGE

I shall now try and pinpoint some of the aspects in modern India which pose a special challenge for this generation. Before solutions to the numerous problems confronting us can be attempted it is important that their scope and magnitude should be clearly and unequivocally recognized. It is only after such recognition that we can attempt the quest for an ideology which would help us in solving them.

The fundamental challenge before us is the building up of a free and democratic India—politically integrated, economically prosperous, socially progressive and spiritually dynamic—which can play its true role in the broader comity of nations that comprise mankind. This is an integral task, and it is not always desirable to compartmentalize it into various categories. Nevertheless, for purposes of analysis this has got to be done, and therefore I intend dealing with the challenge from a few clearly defined—but not mutually exclusive—viewpoints.

The first series of challenges with which we are faced are in the political sphere. As the result of the legalistic and democratic tradition of the national movement, we gave ourselves a comprehensive written Constitution based firmly upon respect for individual freedom and a deep commitment to democratic practice. The adoption of this Constitution was an act of faith because there was no assu-

rance that a country of the magnitude and population of India, with its vast masses largely uneducated and unused to the sophistications of parliamentary democracy, would be able to work the system laid out therein. That it has in fact functioned fairly well for a decade and a half is certainly no mean achievement, although this working has shown up some weaknesses in our body politic which require careful attention.

One of the important features of the Constitution, the result directly of the partition and its aftermath, is that although it lays down a federal structure it has given it a strong unitary bias. The central authority is endowed with a plenitude of overriding powers to help it ensure that unity will be maintained even in the most difficult circumstances, particularly in a national emergency. This reflected the intense preoccupation of the Constitution makers to ensure that although a large chunk of India in the north-west and the east broke off as the result of the emergence of Pakistan, the remainder would become a strong and viable nation. One of the most serious difficulties was the existence of over five hundred princely States, all in different stages of development and each jealous of its individuality. That the integration of these States took place—with very few exceptions—peacefully and constitutionally, is a tribute alike to the sagacity and statesmanship of the national leaders as well as the sense of realism and patriotism of the princes. This healthy development greatly facilitated the emergence of a strong and united India.

Fundamental rights, justiciable by a Supreme Court which is perhaps the most powerful of its kind

in the world, have been guaranteed to every individual. Universal adult suffrage, rule of law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, a series of checks and balances to ensure that the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary can function freely and yet not arbitrarily; a detailed code of financial and legislative procedure; a number of directive principles designed to give a blueprint for progress; complete secularization of the State and full religious freedom for all communities; these are some of the outstanding features of our Constitution.

It is now almost fifteen years since the Constitution came into effect on the 26th January 1950, and since then three General Elections have been held with remarkable success. With very few exceptions India today is the only parliamentary democracy functioning in Asia, and in view of the fact that it covers almost one-seventh of the human race it is a landmark of freedom and individual liberty in this part of the world. We may not always appreciate it, but it is a fact that we live under a system of Government which gives us more freedom of thought and expression, of movement and assembly, of religion and conscience, than that enjoyed by almost any other peoples living outside Western Europe and North America. But it can never be stressed too much that we cannot take democracy for granted merely because it is enshrined in our Constitution. Democracy in India is still a delicate sapling that has constantly to be nurtured and strengthened if it is to take firm roots and grow into a towering tree giving shade and sustenance to our vast millions.

It is this strengthening of democracy that, to my mind, is one of the main challenges facing the post-independence generation. The dangers to democracy are many, the most important being the fissiparous tendencies that have been an unhealthy feature in this country throughout its long and varied history. Internecine division and conflicts have often in the past weakened India and left her prey to predatory invasions from foreign lands. It would be a tragedy too deep for tears if, having emerged into the light of freedom after so long a subjugation, we allow this particular feature of our history to repeat itself. If our democracy is to survive we must forge a national unity strong enough to over-ride all smaller considerations and lesser loyalties. Indeed political unity and stability is the *sine qua non* for economic and social development, and for the strengthening of our international stature.

This is not to say that we should aim at a dead and colourless uniformity, a soul-killing regimentation, even if that were possible in a country of 450 million people with a vast variety of race and language, custom and tradition. On the contrary ours is essentially a pluralistic society in which every State, linguistic group and religious denomination has its own peculiar contribution to make to the varied and colourful tapestry that is India. This diversity of custom and tradition lends richness to our great land which stretches twenty-five hundred miles from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, and an almost equal distance from Gujarat in the west to Assam far in the east. But what is required is that transcending our lesser

loyalties there must be an over-riding sense of Indianness, a joy of being citizens of this ancient land, a pride in her past achievements, confidence in her present development and hope in her future destiny. If we of the post-independence generation can firmly grasp this spirit and make it an inalienable part of our mental texture, then there is no danger to the unity of this country despite its multifaceted diversity.

In a parliamentary democracy political parties play a crucial role in providing the motive force whereby the whole system functions. It has thus been a stabilizing factor of considerable importance that since independence a single party, the Indian National Congress, has provided the Government at the Centre and—with minor exceptions—in all the States. It is also encouraging that rather than proliferating into splinter groups the opposition has also emerged in a few quite clearly defined parties, because no parliamentary system can be sustained for long without one or more responsible opposition parties which must ultimately be able to offer a working alternative to the electorate.

Indeed it is obvious that as time passes the historical primacy of a single party will necessarily wane, and there will be a growing plurality of political parties functioning under the Constitution. When this happens the system will face strains that it has so far avoided. There is no reason to assume that these will prove disastrous, but it must be realized that they can only be successfully surmounted if there is a growing political awareness among the electorate, an over-riding agreement on the fundamental issue of national integrity among the various

political parties, and an end to the curious and distressing phenomenon of intra-party factionalism that has been so much in evidence over the past few years.

In the context of political unity I would like to make special reference to the delicate but very important question of integration of the Indian Muslim. I know it is unfashionable to mention this topic, and most people steer well clear of it either because they feel that anything they say might be misunderstood, or from the mistaken view that by merely evading the problem it will automatically disappear. It is, of course, true that as far as the Constitution is concerned there is no discrimination whatsoever against or in favour of any religious community, and that the rule of law prevails in the land. The fact remains, however, that the traumatic effects of partition cannot be merely willed away, and there is evidence to suggest that the psychological integration of the Indian Muslim in many parts of the country is still not complete.

Indeed this is more a psychological than a political problem, and it is exacerbated by the existence of an avowedly theocratic Islamic Republic as our nearest neighbour. For us in Kashmir this question has special significance. Ours is the only Muslim majority State in India, and we are thus in a position to play a key role in strengthening the secular structure of the nation and helping in the process of the psychological integration of Indian Muslims as a whole. It is true that Muslims in Kashmir constitute hardly five per cent of the entire Muslim population in India, but our peculiar situation gives us a special role in this crucial field.

In any case, the problem of national integration is to no little extent the problem of integrating the Indian Muslim, and this is part of the political challenge which the post-independence generation will have to face. As I said earlier, Islam has played an important role in the building up of our national culture, and it would be most unfortunate if as the result of a hangover from partition it ceases to make its due contribution to the growth and progress of free India also. Partition, right or wrong, fortunate or unfortunate, is now a settled fact of history. Let the post-independence generation at least start with a fresh slate and play its role in the building up of new India regardless of religious or denominational differences.

The question of language is also one of great relevance in the context of national integration. I am not one of those who lament the formation of linguistic States; indeed this was an inevitable development and in many ways marked a distinct improvement on the old *ad hoc* divisions of the country under British rule. But when this is said the fact remains that linguistic States have accentuated the problem of having one or more common languages to act as an essential cementing factor in national unity. The linguistic problem will have to be squarely tackled by the new generation if political unity is to be maintained and strengthened.

We may turn next to the economic challenge. It is clear that as long as vast millions of our countrymen continue to live in poverty and squalor, not knowing from where their next meal is coming nor having economic security of any kind, this nation can never really become great. As long as lakhs

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of men are unemployed, women inadequately clothed, children underfed and deprived of the benefit of even elementary education; while peasants remain dependent for their very subsistence upon the vagaries of the weather and economic uncertainty eats into the vitals of the nation, India cannot consider her freedom to be complete. The political revolution has been successfully accomplished but economically we have an immense gap to cover.

It is the post-independence generation that will be largely responsible for the success or otherwise of our economic development. Plans indeed have been meticulously drawn up, and we are now nearing the end of the Third Plan with the outlines of a Fourth and still more ambitious programme already before us. But it can never be over-emphasized that mere paper planning is of no use unless accompanied by the zeal and enthusiasm to put the plans into action at every level and achieve the targets indicated therein. This implementation of the plans is essentially the function of our generation and constitutes one of the main challenges facing us today. We must be imbued with untiring energy and an insatiable appetite for work if we are to break through the poverty barrier that surrounds us and take our economy into the self-generating stage. We are at present poised for what has come to be known as the "economic take-off"; whether we will in fact be able to become air-borne, or will only rumble along the ground to crash disastrously at the end of the runway, will to a considerable extent be decided by the post-independence generation.

There is a school of thought which holds that

in developing countries no real economic progress is possible without harsh regimentation. In the West the industrial revolution came first and created the basic sociological foundations upon which democratic institutions were then raised. In India we are attempting the reverse—first we have given ourselves democracy and now we are striving to bring about an industrial transformation—and the argument is that this is foredoomed to failure.

Now it is certainly true that in the democratic system it is often not easy to get all sections and interests concerned with the process of economic growth to co-operate. But it is precisely here that there arises a special challenge to the post-independence generation to ensure that the plan is fully understood and implemented throughout the country. It must be remembered that economic planning on this scale in an under-developed country by democratic means is a unique experiment, and it can only succeed if the vast masses concerned in the process of development are enthused by the concept of planning and actively co-operate in its success. A spirit of positive endeavour has to be created, starting from the great cities and percolating down to the remotest village in India, a spirit of dedicated achievement that on the one hand dispels the ignorance and apathy which is still so familiar a feature on our rural scene, and on the other overrides the narrow vested interests bent on unfair exploitation that we so often come across in our cities.

In the process of economic development problems are also posed by the fact that in our federal set-up, while the Centre is largely responsible for

general economic development, it does not have corresponding financial control over the States. In all three of our plans so far the States have tended to fall short of their targets as far as the raising of income is concerned, with the result that the whole system is thrown out of gear. Also there has arisen the undesirable practice of States presenting inflated demands to the Planning Commission in the hope that even after cuts they will get a higher allotment. It would appear that unless co-ordination between the States and the Centre in matters of planned development shows marked improvement the whole process of economic growth will be seriously retarded. And this co-operation would require an integrated approach to national development which transcends local interests and conflicts, and is not inhibited by excessive sub-patriotisms. Such an approach will have to be built up by the younger generation if our magnificent experiment in democratic development is not to peter out and get lost in the dreary desert sands of inertia and inefficiency.

In the broad spectrum of economic development special mention must be made of the crucial agricultural sector. Even a country with the resources of the Soviet Union has had immense difficulty in this sphere, and India with its very high population-land ratio, its immense load of rural indebtedness, its backward methods of agriculture and numerous other disabilities is not at all in an enviable position. Nevertheless, we have got to progress in the field of agriculture, and the problem must be tackled at all levels, including the very important aspect of encouraging imaginative farming and rural leadership. In view of the growing pressure

on land the rush among educated youth for urban white-collared jobs is to some extent inevitable, but the danger lies in the fact that most of the educated talent and initiative is sucked away from the soil, thus rendering the crucial agricultural break-through even more difficult.

Three quarters of our countrymen continue to live in rural India, and if one thing is absolutely certain it is that failure on the agricultural front will ensure disaster to our whole economic experiment. Conversely, if we succeed in breaking through the apathy and stagnation that grips us in the sphere of agriculture we will be bringing much nearer the day when our economy will become self-sustaining. The younger generation must realize this challenge clearly, and must have a renewed commitment to increasing the produce of the land. It was the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who said that we are a nation committed to hard labour. This is particularly true of the younger generation, but we can draw comfort from the fact that we are privileged to labour at one of the crucial junctures of our history.

Another special challenge in the economic sphere is the problem of administration and implementation of our plans. Planning to become effective must be put into action, and if the administrative and organizational apparatus is not capable of meeting this task then to a large extent planning is foredoomed to failure. Public administration thus has a crucial role to play in economic progress, specially in developing countries where capital resources are strictly limited and the economy has little of the cushioning that it enjoys in more affluent

societies. Indeed the very success or failure of the whole planning experiment depends to a significant degree upon the calibre and effectiveness of the administrative apparatus whose task it is to implement plan projects. And it must be realized that the administrative machinery consists in the final analysis of individual human beings belonging increasingly to the post-independence generation. Thus upon their performance depends the whole economic future of the nation.

A word would not be out of place here regarding the question of corruption about which a great deal has recently been heard. It cannot be denied that corruption is widespread, corroding the idealism of the young and the consciences of the old. This must be squarely admitted and faced if we are to move ahead, for while a masochistic recital of our weaknesses is futile and enervating, a frank appraisal of our shortcomings can be the first step in their removal. The problems of good administration and corruption are closely connected with the economic challenge that faces the post-independence generation, because if we fail in this crucial sphere our whole national progress will be gravely endangered.

Turning next to the social sphere we see that the impact of modernization upon a traditional society has caused a vast convulsion. Old values are crumbling; hide-bound institutions such as caste and the joint family are beginning to break down; the traditional pattern of centuries is being exposed to new pressures and strains which are gradually but inexorably changing the very structure of our society. This 'ordeal of change' is inevitable and

necessary; without it India will never get transformed into an integrated and dynamic society attuned to the requirements of this nuclear age. To lament the so-called good old days is in fact an exercise in futility, because good, bad or indifferent the old days have passed irretrievably into the archives of history never to return. We move onwards along the corridors of time and for us there can be no turning back, nor can we afford the luxury of past regrets.

The problems of modernization in a traditional society are much too vast to allow of even superficial treatment here, but it is worthwhile to point out that they constitute a crucial set of challenges to the younger generation which has constantly to adjust itself to changing circumstances. The growth of urbanization, the advent of large-scale industrialization, the improvement of communications, by road and rail, water and air; the spread of literacy and education in the villages and the progressive eradication of disease; the ubiquitous and far-ranging impact of the film and the radio, the political campaign and the general election; all these have their impact upon society. This impact necessarily causes strains and stresses to develop which often assume alarming proportions, and yet as I have said this is an inevitable process because India must modernize or perish. And because this is so the post-independence generation must come to grips with these challenges, and face them boldly and positively.

In the context of the social challenge it is necessary to make particular mention of this question of caste which is so important in the Indian expe-

rience. It is not very useful to enter into long arguments regarding the origin of caste in India, nor to try and prove or disprove the utility and rationale this institution possessed in the past. The question we of the post-independence generation must ask ourselves is whether there is any place for narrow caste barriers in a free and democratic India, and whether it is possible for us, while retaining whatever it has of value, so to re-interpret the caste concept as to bring it in line with contemporary requirements. In particular, we must take a clear and unequivocal stand with regard to the place in society of the Harijans, whose treatment in the past has been a shame and disgrace to the fair name of India. A constitutional provision is not enough; what is required is an unambiguous moral commitment on the part of the post-independence generation.

The break up of the joint family system, and its increasing replacement by what has been well described as the 'nuclear' family consisting of the husband, wife and children is a phenomenon which directly affects the younger generation. While it may result in a certain feeling of insecurity it has the great advantage of making younger people more self-sufficient and releasing within them fresh energy and initiative to make their way in the world without paternalistic guidance. As always happens when a nation goes through a period of vast changes, we find that the psychological gulf between the generations becomes much wider than before, specially in this fast moving atomic age. Older people find it hard to understand the outlook or even the language of the youngsters, and tend to look with stern disapproval upon what they

consider to be their lack of culture and courtesy, of religious observance and the respect they feel is due to them as elders. Members of the younger generation, for their part, often reveal a marked lack of rapport with their elders. They consider them to be archaic, absurdly conservative, unsympathetic to their fresh aspirations—in short crusty old bores!

While this, as I have said, is an understandable phenomenon, it does create deep problems of psychological stress and imbalance in both the older and the younger generations. But while the former are likely to be more mature in their response, the latter go through considerable difficulties in adjustment. There is the need here for sympathetic understanding and guidance, particularly for teen-agers, but all too often this goes unfulfilled with unhappy results. The whole problem is further complicated by the drastic changes in the very mode of living of the younger generation particularly in urban areas, changes in food and dress, in manners and morals. I have mentioned this because the process of modernization is always a difficult and painful one, specially for younger people. This is a basic challenge that the post-independence generation in India, and those that follow, are having to face, and it is one that can be greatly eased if older people approach it with a sympathetic understanding.

We can now turn to the international challenge. No country can in the present world be an island unto itself, far less a vast subcontinent like India which has for centuries been the crossroads of many cultures, the crucible of many races, the

meeting ground of many civilizations. By her very geographic location India is deeply involved in world affairs. Whether it is the mighty power of Soviet Russia on our north or the growing challenge of China in the east; the smaller countries of south and south-east Asia that are our close neighbours or the vast continent of Africa that has in recent years awoken into new life and activity; Great Britain and Europe with whom we have had associations for many centuries, or the newer but even more powerful presence of the United States of America; the still distant continent of South America or the far-flung vastness of Australasia; everywhere we look we find that world events impinge upon us. And as free citizens we can no longer afford the luxury of letting the Government alone worry about foreign affairs, it is essential that the post-independence generation be fully conscious of international problems, and actively interested in their outcome.

It is not my intention to deviate into a detailed analysis of world affairs, nor even to enumerate the immediate problems with which we are confronted in the realm of foreign relations. I merely wish to point out that a whole series of challenges arises from the very fact that ours is a great country actively involved in world politics. This international bias was evident even in the early stages of the national movement, and men like Sri Aurobindo strove for Indian independence largely because they believed that free India had a special role to fulfil in world affairs. Much later one of our greatest national leaders, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was with us until only a few months

ago, was deeply committed to this broader aspect of our functioning. We must, therefore, include the challenge of international relations as among the most important of those which the younger generation faces today.

In particular the relationship with two of our nearest neighbours is a matter for the gravest concern. China, the most populous nation in the world with a proud and ancient civilization, is today a resurgent and expansionist power. Barely two years ago, on that fateful 20th of October 1962, the Chinese invasion shook us to our very roots, not merely militarily but even more so politically and psychologically. A nation with whom we had a tradition of friendship going back many centuries, for whose entry into the world forum we strove tirelessly, for whom we went out of our way to strengthen our friendship even to the extent of what many felt amounted to compromising our national interests in Tibet, turned upon us in anger and aggression. The important advance in the nuclear field recently made by China has added a special dimension to this problem, and raises a whole gamut of fundamental questions regarding our own nuclear policy which have rightly become the subject of widespread debate and discussion. It is not necessary here to recount the tragedy of the Chinese aggression and its aftermath; my intention is to point out that relations with China constitute one of the most important challenges that face us in the international field.

The second, of course, is our relationship with Pakistan. The historical roots of separatism in the subcontinent have unfortunately been so often

nurtured with blood and fanaticism on both sides that even today—seventeen years after partition—the wounds continue to fester. And yet there is some comfort in the hope that perhaps the post-independence generations in both countries who are relatively free of past inhibitions and complexes can consider their mutual relationship in a calmer and more constructive manner. It must be clearly remembered that despite partition the closest ties of history, geography, economy and culture bind the two sovereign and independent nations of India and Pakistan to each other with hoops of steel. Whether it is to be for all times to come a hostile and mutually destructive alliance, or whether better sense will ultimately prevail, will be determined largely by the performance and calibre of the post-independence generation.

Finally, there is the ideological challenge. We are passing through one of those historic phases of flux and readjustment when the old has ceased to be and the new is still to be fully born. It is a period in which the nation—particularly the younger generation—is groping in an ideological vacuum for a new certitude. All the other problems we have outlined ultimately resolve themselves into the basic question of our 'weltanschauung', our world view. The post-independence generation in particular requires an ideology which would help it to evolve an integrated approach to the various challenges that confront it, and this must necessarily be based on our attitude to some of the fundamental problems of life. What is our view regarding the nature of the individual and of the universe in which he finds himself? What

is the true nature of the human personality and the goal of human existence? Unless and until we have formulated some sort of coherent views with regard to these matters, howsoever abstruse and complex they may appear, it is difficult to tackle adequately the wide spectrum of challenges that face us.

III. THE RESPONSE

The quest for ideology today is a phenomenon confined not only to the youth of India but to younger people throughout the world. The very events of this century have been such that the whole prospect of human life on this planet has changed. With the development and perfection of nuclear power, weapons of monstrous dimensions have become available for men to use against each other. It is estimated that the United States and the Soviet Union between them alone have tens of thousands of bombs, each of a destructive power so great as to make the Hiroshima and Nagasaki explosions look merely like children's fireworks. This massive expansion in the destructive ability of mankind has for the first time brought within the realm of possibility the complete extinction and annihilation of the human race, and therefore it would be true to say that no earlier generation in the history of mankind has ever had to face challenges as severe as those which confront us today with the world poised precariously between calamitous destruction and unprecedented progress.

By no means have all the effects of science been menacing. Indeed the rapid improvements in technology have led to a remarkable transformation in the living standards of vast millions of people; the development of communications, the jet airliner, radio, television and other advances in the field of electro-

nics have shrunk the world to a fraction of its former size. The heights of the Himalayas and the depths of the oceans are being progressively opened out for human study and exploitation. Engineering marvels are changing arid deserts into smiling fields, diverting the destructive power of rivers into constructive channels, bridging mighty chasms and spanning huge lakes. There is hardly an aspect of human life that is not being profoundly transformed by the technological revolution, and the future prospects which the peaceful uses of science hold for mankind are almost unlimited.

Most exciting of all, we have begun probing into the immense vastnesses of outer space. Already several human beings have ventured out of the iron grip of gravity that has imprisoned the human race ever since it began its long and arduous evolutionary adventure on this planet. It will not be long now before man sets foot on the moon, and that itself will become the launching pad for further probings into other parts of the solar system, and later even deeper into the galaxy.

The younger generation today, therefore, has before it a panorama of infinite variety and excitement. There are dangers more terrible than the intellect can grasp, and yet there are opportunities for growth and development that also stun the imagination. The future of the human race will be decided by the manner in which we make our choice between these two sets of possibilities, and in this context it needs to be emphasized that the gap between the growing physical power at the control of man on the one hand and his own inner development on the other is fraught with grave danger.

Whereas the former has expanded beyond recognition in this century and continues to grow at an amazing rate, it is questionable whether human beings are internally more balanced and integrated than they were before. Let there be no mistake about it, if man is to survive and take constructive advantage of the immense power that he finds at his disposal he will have to bring about an inner transformation that will enable him to use his new-found potentialities to the advantage of the human race. We cannot have scientific advance and spiritual stagnation proceeding side by side without coming ultimately to a disastrous precipice. And therefore it is that the quest for ideology of this generation is not merely *any* quest but one that is crucial to the very existence of the human race itself.

It is thus a matter for the gravest concern when we often see the younger generations in India and, even more dramatically, in the West, falling back either upon complete cynicism or into a nihilistic and destructive frame of mind. It is the young men and women of today whose fingers tomorrow will be upon the buttons that can unleash a nuclear holocaust throughout the world. We must, therefore, strive to find for ourselves an ideology which would enable us to meet the grave challenges that we face with a certain degree of confidence and equanimity. And particularly for the post-independence generation in India this quest is all the more significant, because we are heirs to one of the great cultures of the world and must live up to our glowing heritage.

It is true, that traditional values have been gravely impaired and shaken in recent years, and

it is also true that there can be no retrogression. But this does not mean that we should reject our cultural roots and our spiritual heritage, or that we can afford to give up those eternal principles that have come down to us from the very dawn of our civilization. If we do so we will drift rudderless in a miasma of doubt and change, with no compass to point out to us the direction in which we should proceed. It is a well accepted fact that communities which are displaced from their cultural moorings tend to develop undesirable, even psychopathic, tendencies. And, therefore, those who urge that we should reject our cultural roots are giving dangerous advice. What is in fact required is an ideology firmly rooted in our past wisdom but at the same time progressive, adventurous and forward-looking. It is only when we are firmly based that we can derive the strength and stability to push boldly into the future.

It is on this basic premise that I will now try and share with you some thoughts regarding a system of ideas to sustain the post-independence generation. We must start inevitably with ourselves as individual human beings. There is a view that the human race and all life is in fact merely "a fortuitous conglomeration of atoms" devoid of any ultimate significance, and that—to quote a famous poet—

> "The world which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain,
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."

If this is true then indeed there is little hope for humanity. If we are a mere fortuitous accident it would seem that with the development of nuclear energy our good fortune is on the wane and we must soon be shattered back into our pre-conglomerate state! What hope is there then for humanity, what attitude except a barren existentialism?

But there is another approach to the human personality that is much more positive and hopeful, enshrined in some of the world's greatest teachings, notably the Upanishads. It postulates that there is a spark of divinity within each human being which constitutes the true nucleus of his personality. This is indestructible; fire cannot burn it nor weapons cleave it nor, for that matter, can nuclear bombs shatter its eternal existence. I feel that today we have either to accept a completely soulless and materialistic philosophy or to realize that the divinity of the individual human being is the only basis upon which to build a positive and dynamic philosophy of life. Once this is accepted as the fundamental principle of our ideology it follows that a realization by each individual of the divinity inherent in him, a spiritual evolution culminating in the actualization of the imperishable link with the Reality that pervades all existence, must be the supreme goal of human endeavour.

Contrary to a widespread misconception, this need not mean a withdrawal from active life in the world, because although the Supreme far transcends visible existence, every atom is nevertheless completely permeated by it. The Supreme Reality —whether we call it God, or the Absolute,

or the Divine or by any other name—is not only transcendent but immanent, and its presence can be felt in every cell of manifested existence—

Ishavasyam idam sarvam
yatkincha jagatyam jagat

As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, we must be able to see God with our eyes open, not merely with our eyes closed. Let us, therefore, reject at once the theory that an ideology based upon a spiritual principle is necessarily life-negating and escapist. On the contrary I would submit that such a philosophy alone can help us affirm life with all its many-splendoured facets in its truest sense. It should also be pointed out that the theory of spiritual growth is by no means a selfish, individualistic one. In fact it is broad enough to embrace the whole human race by laying before it the glowing ideal of spiritual evolution.

To start with the political aspect, it is clear that the human spirit can best develop in an atmosphere of individual freedom and dignity. A political system which runs counter to the freedom of the individual is to that extent unconducive to spiritual development, specially in modern times when the ambit of State activities has necessarily expanded to cover almost all aspects of the individual's life. While by no means making a plea for a return to the old stagnant concept of *laissez-faire*, it is worth emphasizing that there *is* a sphere of individual freedom in which the State cannot intrude without cramping and warping the human spirit. It is this sphere which is so often threaten-

ed by totalitarian regimes regardless of their political complexion, while a democracy by and large respects it as being outside State control.

A democratic order would thus appear to be best suited for the free development of the human spirit because it offers freedom in many different spheres of activity which are in fact so many components of an individual's psychological and spiritual existence. If we cannot talk freely for fear of being overheard and reported to the police, if we cannot write and express our views with freedom within the ambit of law, if we do not have the right to assemble or to practise our own religion in freedom, it is obvious that our spiritual development will also be hampered. The maintenance and strengthening of democracy, therefore, quite apart from its other merits, is necessary to provide the political framework of freedom within which the individual can develop his various faculties including his spiritual potentialities.

This framework can only endure if the nation remains united. India is more to us than a mere geographical and political entity; she is the motherland that has nurtured our race and our civilization since the very dawn of history. From the snow-clad Himalayas in the north which are the sentinels of our freedom and culture down to the mighty oceans that meet at Kanyakumari, this land of ours has for millennia given us shelter and protection. It is, therefore, virtually a spiritual imperative for us to maintain the unity of India, for in unity lies her strength and the assurance that we, her children, will be able to pursue our temporal and

transcendental goals with freedom and confidence. To this unity, therefore, the post-independence generation must be unalterably and unambiguously committed. India is a nation of great diversity and multiplicity, however, and if unity is to be ensured it is essential to keep this spiritual aspect clearly in mind. Once this is firmly grasped the diversity no longer remains a danger; in fact it adds to the richness and beauty of our national culture.

The same is the case with regard to the various religions that flourish in our country. The basic premise of our ideology, that each human being is potentially divine, completely rules out any fanaticism or discrimination on the grounds of religion. Indeed it must be clearly understood that various religions are in fact so many different approaches to the same spiritual goal, and can make no basic difference as far as our being Indians is concerned. What is more, we have a noble tradition of religious tolerance and understanding which can be traced back to the Rigvedic utterance: *Ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti*—"Truth is one, the wise call it by many names". And so an acceptance of a spiritual unity cutting across all linguistic and religious barriers will greatly strengthen the political unity so essential for our future progress.

In the long centuries of our history many religious systems have acted and interacted upon each other, and all have been deeply influenced by this mutual contact. It is not my purpose here to enter into even a cursory examination of this fascinating story. It must suffice to say that wherever mystical idealism and true spiritual realization was

found, narrow denominational differences disappeared as if by magic, and the true spiritual unity of human beings emerged triumphant. In Kashmir, for example, Shaivism and Sufism merged to produce a series of great mystic saints to whom Hindus and Muslims alike paid reverence and from whom each drew equal inspiration. Indeed this is true of the whole great mediaeval Bhakti movement that for several centuries brought a new faith and light throughout India irrespective of caste or creed.

My point here is to emphasize that although in the past religion has all too often been a divisive factor, causing by a supreme irony an immense load of conflict and human suffering, it can if correctly understood prove to be the strongest link between man and man. In free, secular, democratic India we must strive to create in the younger generations a fresh awareness of this transcendental aspect of religion that will leave no room for narrow fanaticism and ignorant hostility. And this can only be based upon the inalienable principle of divinity in the heart of all mankind.

In the social sphere our ideology shows us very clearly the line which we should adopt. If there is divinity inherent in every human being, there can be no question of narrow caste distinctions and prejudices. While it would be wrong and unhelpful to dub all customs and traditions associated with caste unhealthy, or to insist that they be summarily given up *in toto,* it should be quite clear that what we must strive to build in India is a new caste of *Indians* who combine within themselves the best of the four traditional castes of Hinduism. Thus

members of the post-independence generation should ideally possess the learning and wisdom traditionally ascribed to the Brahmins; the valour and fearlessness of the Kshatriyas; the commercial acumen and agricultural ability of the Vaishyas; and the spirit of service and sacrifice of the Shudras.

Thus integrated around a spiritual principle we should have men and women imbued with a new sense of mission and purpose who, while rejecting outmoded prejudices and taboos typical of the caste system in the past, would form the nucleus of a new and resurgent India in the future. This is essential if our society is to become an integrated and co-operative entity capable of growth and transformation in this rapidly changing nuclear age. If we remain a house divided among itself, torn with caste and class conflicts and bitterness it will be almost impossible for us to break out of our present difficulties. It is a curious irony that while our Constitution lays down definite mandates against caste discrimination, there is evidence to show that caste continues to play a major, according to some analysts a growing, role in our general elections. This can only be remedied when we adopt a spiritual world-view that transcends all such barriers and postulates a true unity between all Indians irrespective of caste or creed.

The question of correct family relations is also an important one, specially in the light of factors such as the break-up of the joint family system and the growing psychological gulf between generations. I feel that whereas previously the head of the family was the kingpin around which the whole system revolved, family happiness and stability

can nowadays be built only on the foundations of a harmonious and co-equal relationship between husband and wife. The status of women, who are given full political equality under the Constitution, has been considerably improved by social legislation (unfortunately confined only to the Hindus) since independence. But the true stature of Woman is neither constitutional nor legal, it is as a full physical and spiritual partner of Man. We have in our culture the noble concept of woman as the 'ardhangini'—equal sharer in the whole endeavour and adventure that is life. This concept has to be re-created in free India among the post-independence generations, because then only will the women of India be able to make their full contribution to the progress of this great country and to their own inner spiritual development.

We may now turn to the crucial sphere of economics. It is often argued that in some way a spiritual world-view is incompatible with economic progress. This certainly need not be so; on the contrary it is surely quite clear that as long as vast millions in this country are denied the basic necessities of life and deprived of adequate food and clothing, shelter and medical services, education and leisure, it is obviously not possible for them to make any appreciable spiritual progress. When the daily struggle for survival is grim and unrelenting there is little time for turning to the higher spiritual quest, nor are conditions conducive towards that enlargement of inner horizons which is the essence of true religion. Some unsympathetic observers have made much of the charge that poverty has been an ideal in this country, and that this acts as

a psychological brake upon economic progress. They fail to understand that this has always been voluntary poverty, the poverty of a Buddha or a Shankara who spurned material wealth in order to bring the light of wisdom and knowledge to suffering humanity. For society at large even traditionally there was prescribed a four-fold goal—Dharma, righteousness; Artha, wealth; Kama, material enjoyment; and finally Moksha, liberation from the bonds of temporal existence. In fact Moksha could only follow, not precede, the other three.

Indeed it must be clearly and unequivocally accepted that without a firm economic base our whole ideal of the divinity of the individual gets blurred and untenable. It is, therefore, essential that we must strive in every way to bring about the economic regeneration of this country so that every man, woman and child in India enjoys the necessary foundation upon which to build the edifice of spiritual endeavour and achievement. And it is obvious that for this economic development we must use the most modern means of science and technology, whereby alone can we hope to overcome the immense problems inherent in taking almost half a billion human beings forward on the road of progress and prosperity. We must beware, however, of letting the machine become master of man. Machines are excellent servants but very bad masters, and in our economic and industrial progress care must be taken to prevent as far as possible the dignity of the individual being subordinated to the exigencies of material progress, and the creative spontaneity of human endeavour to the soul-killing regimen of the machine.

While on the subject of economic development, I might make special mention of the population problem which poses so severe a threat to our national well-being. Here again our basic premise will show us the way, because if individuals are to achieve spiritual growth they must get the necessary opportunities for development, and an unrestricted expansion in numbers would be the surest way of diluting such limited opportunities as are in fact available. The post-independence generation, at least, must be fully siezed of the dire necessity to limit population growth which threatens the very fabric of our national progress.

In the sphere of administration we come to another very important problem that I have posed earlier, our approach to work. A spiritually based ideology can on no account mean a commitment to inefficient work and shoddy workmanship, nor the acceptance of a passive and fatalistic attitude to the glorious adventure of living. In fact yoga has been defined as *karmasu kaushalam,* skill in work, and the post-independence generation must develop a dynamic new approach to work if this nation is really to become great. We see too much of inefficient and corrupt working in this country, and although a comprehensive series of measures are being undertaken to curb this evil it can only be eradicated if work itself is looked upon as a spiritual endeavour.

One of the fundamental principles of our culture has been the realization that although we have little control over the results of our work we can certainly decide the means whereby those results

are sought to be obtained. As the Bhagavadgita has it:—

Karmanyevadhikaraste
ma phaleshu kadachana

"You have the right only to the work itself; never to the fruit thereof". This does not mean that we should not expect our labours to bear fruit; that would be a pessimistic and depressing conclusion. What it does mean is that work itself is sacred, and that the process of work should be given the greatest importance. The Ishavasya Upanishad also has the famous line stressing the same principle:

Kurvanneveha karmani
jijeevishet shatamsamah

"Verily, performing works in this world, one should wish to live for a hundred years."

It is here necessary to lay stress upon an aspect of our national life that is fundamental to all that has been said above, our educational system. If we accept the view regarding the divinity inherent in each individual and seek to make this the basis of our integration in the political, economic and social spheres; if we wish the younger generations to have a correct attitude towards work and endeavour; if we strive to generate among youth that idealism which alone can ensure the eradication of corruption and the speeding up of progress in all spheres of national life, then it is quite essential that our whole educational philosophy must be carefully re-thought and re-planned from the primary right up to the University level.

I do not intend here to launch into a long detour on education, even if I had the competence to

do so. I wish merely to submit that the spiritual world-view can never become a living reality in the minds and hearts of our young men and women unless it is made an integral part of the educational system from the lowest level. This is not a plea for religious instruction as such; the approach I have indicated has little in common with organized religion and ritual. But surely we should not fight shy of accepting a basic philosophy which would inform our educational system, for by doing so we run the appalling risk of having the younger generations grow up without any knowledge of or sympathy with our philosophy and culture, alienated from the whole glorious heritage that is ours by right of birth and history.

Another weakness in our present system is that it is seldom linked with actual requirements, as the result of which we have a growing problem of educated unemployed. Nothing is more frustrating and psychologically harmful than for a young man to go through the educational mill and at the end find that he is not wanted in any useful activity. This also involves a shocking waste of scarce resources which a developing nation like ours can ill-afford. If those belonging to the younger generations, therefore, are to have a fair chance to meet successfully the challenges that face them, we must improve our educational system so that it will provide a firmer basis for spiritual growth and national development.

In this context the question of language in our education is of crucial importance. As I have said earlier, while the formation of linguistic States and the consequent development of regional languages has been most welcome, this has also highlighted

the immense importance of our having one or more link languages to ensure the unity and integrity of the nation. A situation in which educated youth of various States would not be able to converse or communicate freely with each other because they do not know any common language is too painful to contemplate and must at all costs be prevented from developing.

We have at present two great languages which can play a valuable role as link languages in our vast and teeming nation, Hindi and English. Hindi is the mother-tongue of the largest single linguistic group in the country, and the Constitution has raised it to the level of a national language. I myself come from a non-Hindi speaking State, but I have no doubt that if we approach the matter dispassionately we will realize the great importance of learning Hindi and thus forging further links in the bonds of national unity.

It must be admitted, however, that Hindi still has certain limitations, and it is here that our second national language—English—has a very important place. I have no hesitation in calling English a national language, because it is no longer the preserve only of England or even of the Anglo-Saxon world. In the course of the last hundred years it has developed into the leading world language, and in India it has for almost two hundred years played a key role in our national development. True, its impact has been confined to a small fraction of our population, but its influence has nonetheless been profound and abiding. What is more, it is indispensable in scientific and technological studies which must take an increasingly important place in

our educational system, and it is also a window on the wider world which is most valuable in an age when all nations are coming rapidly into closer contact with each other. It would indeed be a tragedy if we were to discard the valuable heritage of English that free India possesses.

Before I leave this question of language I would like to make a special mention of two others that have historically played a great role in the development of the Indian nation. Sanskrit is the great mother language of India, one of the most beautiful and powerful known to mankind, and in it are enshrined the glories of our ancient culture and civilization. It must never be allowed to die out, for it has an unrivalled power to uplift and inspire. In fact the teaching of Sanskrit must be modernized and its study encouraged among as large a section of students as possible. A knowledge of Sanskrit will incidentally much facilitate an appreciation of the regional languages also as all of them, with perhaps the exception of Tamil, are in fact derived from Sanskrit. Urdu is another language of considerable grace and subtlety, and whoever wishes to learn it should get full opportunity to do so.

Finally, we come to the sphere of international relations. It may be considered somewhat far-fetched to extend the scope of our ideology to cover this aspect also, but in fact all human endeavour is integral and cannot be compartmentalized. And it will be seen that a spiritually based outlook contains the seeds of an international integration also, because if each individual human being possesses the divine spark it follows that all men living on this planet are bound to each other by a spiritual

link which must ultimately transcend all lesser barriers and ideological differences. It is obvious that though nationalism is a principle of great power and significance it must in due course be transcended by an internationalism which embraces within its ambit the whole vastness of the human race. Then only will the animosities and jealousies, the fears and suspicions, that today bedevil relations between nations cease to exist; and then only will mankind emerge into a new sunlight of hope and progress, setting aside once and for all the dark spectres of hate and mistrust. This goal of an international integration, howsoever remote it may today appear, must always be a cherished ideal when we set about the complex and delicate tasks of international diplomacy. An ideal may be distant and difficult of attainment, but its very presence inspires us and throws some light on the steep and tortuous path that we have to tread.

Thus it is that our ideology, which starts with the individual human being, comprehends our political, social, economic and administrative challenges, and pushes forward towards an ultimate international integration. In this alone lies the welfare not only of the post-independence generation in India but all young humanity throughout the world, and therefore to strive towards this end is our true historic destiny.



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Dr. Karan Singh is an accomplished speaker and polished writer. The Bhavan's Annual Birla Endowment Lectures that he delivered at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 1964 on *The Post-Independence Generation—Challenge and Response*, which are reproduced in this book, were marked by incisive analysis of modern problems and wise reflections on the trend of events in new India.